

LEARNING CARD

Media are us

Description This didactic card has two main goals: to promote critical thinking about the way media represent young people; to make teenagers think about other possible ways of being portrayed by the media, fostering their active participation in society. For this, students will work in groups analysing media articles or radio pieces to detect patterns of representation.

Tag

- Journalism
- News

Skills

IDEOLOGY AND ETHICS

- Recognise and describe
- Evaluate and reflect
- Apply

SOCIAL MANAGEMENT

- Collaborate

Learning areas

- Foreign Languages
- Language
- Social Sciences

Card language

- Spanish
- English

Structure

Sessions 1

Duration 90'

Number of participants 10-30

Materials

- Pen, paper, pencils
- Different national newspapers and/or magazines
- Television and/or radio news services

Process

Key questions

- How are children and young people represented in the media?
- Does the way the media talk about a specific group influence society's perceptions about it?
- Do you think there are groups of people who are misrepresented in the media? If so, which one and why?
- How many news items do you find in the newspaper/radio or television news service about young people?
- Why are young people in the news?
- Is it for a good or bad reason?
- In that news, does the journalist listen to young people or are there just adults speaking?
- If there are just adult voices and perspectives, who are these adults?
- What about the images, do they show what kind of young people? In which circumstances?

Development

Introduction - 20'

The teacher should introduce the activity, explaining that the exercise aims to promote a reflection about the role media play in our societies, particularly in the way we see ourselves and others.

Then, participants are invited to stand up to do the "agree/disagree" dynamic. On one wall of the classroom there is a paper with the word "agree", on the facing wall there should be another paper with "disagree" written.

Students should imagine a scale between the two walls/papers. The teacher reads sentences and participants should distribute themselves in the virtual scale - for example, if they totally agree with the statement, they should stay close to the "agree" paper. If they have no opinion, they should place themselves in the middle of the two walls, if they disagree but they are not 100% convinced, they should be somewhere between the middle and the disagree paper, and so on.

For each statement, participants should choose a place on the scale and the teacher should ask volunteers to share why they chose to be in that specific position.

After someone shares their point of view, the others can change position in the scale, that is, people can change position after listening to another persons' perspectives.

The teacher can read the following statements to start the discussion and the reflection about the topics:

- 1) The media influence the perspective we have about the world around us;
- 2) It is common to see young people's perspectives represented in the news;
- 3) Young people are usually in the news for good reasons;
- 4) Readers/listeners/spectators have the power to intervene in the media.

The goal here is to understand participants' opinions about the topics that will be discussed during the lesson.

Reflection - 35'

Participants should be divided into groups of 4-5 people. Each group receives a set of different newspapers to analyse. If there are digital devices available, some groups can analyse radio or television news services. If the exercise needs to be done in just one class, then two examples per group is enough.

Each group has 20 minutes to read/listen to/see the material and answer the same questions (see "Specific Questions" above).

Discussion - 10'

When the groups finish the exercise, a spokesperson of each group should sum up their conclusions.

Evaluation

Evaluation and invitation to act - 25'

In this moment the teacher should make sense from the introduction exercise and the analysis part, comparing the initial perspectives of the groups with the results of the analysis carried out.

The teacher can explain that there are a lot of researchers and studies focused on the way children and young people are represented in the media. These studies tell us they are misrepresented, they are usually in the news for bad reasons (crimes, bullying, addictions...) and their voices are not usually heard by journalists, who usually choose adults (namely parents or teachers) to speak about subjects concerning kids and teenagers.

Independently of the results of the analysis, this exercise is supposed to make participants more aware about the way media messages interfere in the way we see the world around us. The same exercise can be done, for example, to see how minorities are represented in media (refugees, gypsies...).

The class shouldn't finish without making participants think about how they could manifest their concerns (if they exist) with the way they are represented in media, promoting their participation in society (suggestions can be the following: write an open letter to a newspaper, write to the director or to the ombudsman of the media analysed, to call the media to cover an initiative they will do and they consider should be broadcast by the media).

References for professors

- Media Education Guidance: http://www.dge.mec.pt/sites/default/files/ECidania/Referenciais/media_education_guidance_dge_pt.pdf
- Site of Common Sense Media: What's media literacy and why is it important? <https://www.common Sense Media.org/news-and-media-literacy/what-is-media-literacy-and-why-is-it-important>
- Center for News Literacy site: <http://drc.centerfornews literacy.org/>

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